

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region

April 4, 2003

ITEM: 16

SUBJECT: Update on Status of Compliance with Waste Discharge Requirements for Transportation Corridor Agencies/CAL TRANS, District 12 – Eastern Transportation Corridor, Section 14, Denitrification Facility, Irvine, Orange County, Order No. R8-2002-0093, NPDES No. CA8000390

DISCUSSION:

On December 3, 2002, the Board issued Order No. R8-2002-0093, NPDES No. CA8000390, to the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) and the California Department of Transportation, District 12 (CAL TRANS) for discharges from the denitrification facility to Peters Canyon Wash, a tributary of San Diego Creek and Newport Bay. The Order includes stringent limitations on discharges of selenium. These limitations are consistent with the wasteload allocations specified in the selenium TMDL promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on June 14, 2002.

The groundwater treated at the denitrification facility is high in selenium concentration. Board staff investigated potential means of treating the selenium to assure compliance with effluent limitations, but found that there is no available technology to achieve the requisite selenium reductions. Further, even if such technology were available, it could not be implemented immediately so as to achieve compliance with the effluent limitations. In light of these findings, the Board included in the Order a schedule for compliance with the selenium effluent limitations. However, recognizing the potential impact of the high selenium in the discharges on the biota, the Board's Order also directed the dischargers to investigate and report on measures that could be implemented rapidly, at least on a short-term basis, to reduce or eliminate selenium discharges. The Order requires the dischargers to report on this investigation by April 1, 2003, and specifies that the Order may be modified in response to the results.

At the December 3, 2002 hearing to consider adoption of Order No. R8-2002-0093, the representative of the TCA committed to report to the Board at the April 4, 2003 meeting concerning the required evaluation. Board staff is aware that TCA and CAL TRANS representatives have pursued alternative discharge scenarios, including sewerage. These representatives will report their findings to the Board.